



Testimony in support of HB 5163  
House Judiciary Committee  
September 9, 2009

ADMINISTRATION  
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Thank you, Mr. Chair for the opportunity to address you today. Hello, I'm Talore Sparks, a High School student from Detroit.

HEALTH CENTERS

And I'm Caleb Kruzel a high school student from Dexter Michigan. We're here today as Planned Parenthood Teen Peer Educators to talk in support of HB 5163 requiring age appropriate comprehensive sex education for all teens in Michigan schools.

Ann Arbor  
734.973.0710  
  
Ann Arbor West  
734.929.9480

I'm sure you can imagine that there are differences between our two school – mine in a small town school and Talore's a large city school. But the questions teens ask us about sexuality are very similar.

Benton Harbor  
269.926.2042  
  
Brighton  
810.220.4513

As peer educators we're trained to provide accurate information to teens on everything from anatomy to abstinence and decision making to contraceptives to sexually transmitted diseases.

Detroit  
313.831.7776  
  
Jackson  
517.784.1700

(Talore) At my school, we basically have no sex education. Before I became a peer educator, my friends based their sexual decisions on myths and other things they had heard. Because of that I have a best friend who has a baby and many others who have had STDs. At my school, when students have questions about sex and they ask teachers or other adults, instead of giving the students correct information adults say they shouldn't be having sex. This is unrealistic and ineffective. I really think teens need to have ALL of the information about sexual health before they make decisions that might change their lives. Teens need to know about STDs, they need to know about contraception, and the benefits of abstinence and this will help them make healthy life choices.

East Lansing  
517.333.6744  
  
Lansing  
517.351.0550  
  
Livonia  
734.591.6544  
  
Warren  
586.558.0101  
  
Ypsilanti  
734.485.0144

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, abstinence-only programs are not only ineffective but they may cause harm by providing inadequate and inaccurate information about birth control, resulting in teens' failure to use contraception if they do have sex.

(Caleb) As a teen who talks to other teens about sexual health, I know how ineffective abstinence-only education can be.

My school was fairly open to the idea of sexual education but the class was still lacking complete and honest information. The class was only once a week for 8 weeks. In my opinion, that is not enough. I took the class as a freshman so I barely remember anything that I was taught.

After my Planned Parenthood training, I was getting bombarded with simple questions from numerous students for information that should have been taught in our sexual education class, like how to protect themselves from STDs and unplanned pregnancy. And that is the flaw that people pushing abstinence only education do not see: teens, my friends, need to know how to protect themselves. And if they are not getting basic, honest, medical information, it is like the class does not even exist.

More needs to be done to change the way Michigan schools go about sexual education to be sure that my friends, my peers, my little sister, everyone else in a Michigan school, has this information for our safety and well being.

We know that 1 out 4 teen girls has a sexually transmitted disease and teen pregnancy has risen the last 2 years in Michigan. We urge the committee to support HB 5163 to ensure teens get comprehensive sexual health education. It's the first step to building healthy futures for Michigan teens.

Thank you Mr. Chair, and committee members for the chance to talk about the health of Michigan teens.